



# Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument

## Questions & Answers

### At a Glance:

- Located northwest of Sacramento, California
- **Total acres:** 330,780  
**U.S. Forest Service acres:** 197,214 acres  
**Bureau of Land Management (BLM) acres:** 133,566
- Co-managed by the Forest Service and BLM

### What is a national monument designation?

National monuments are established by the President of the United States or by Congress to protect objects and areas of historic/prehistoric, cultural, scientific, natural and geologic significance on federal land.

### How many national monuments are there?

With the addition of the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument, there are 114 national monuments across the country managed by federal agencies. The Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument is the 10th monument managed by the Forest Service and the 22nd managed by the BLM. It joins the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains in California and Browns Canyon in Colorado as the third national monument to be managed jointly by the two agencies.

### Who supported the monument designation of the Berryessa Snow Mountain area?

The President's proclamation completed over a decade of hard work by residents, lawmakers, local governments, businesses, academic and conservation groups reflecting broad support for permanent protection of the Berryessa Snow Mountain area. Over 200 local businesses and 35 local and national recreation and conservation organizations expressed their support for the proposed monument. In addition, the California State Legislature and more than 50 state and local elected officials support the monument designation. Congressman Mike Thompson and Senator Barbara Boxer first introduced legislation to designate the area as a National Conservation Area in 2012.

In December 2014, Congressmen Thompson and John Garamendi hosted a listening session with more than 300 community members in attendance.

The session featured a diverse panel of experts representing cultural and ecological disciplines, local government, ranching, recreation interests and conservation organizations. Many of the public comments supported additional protections for the region. The designation reflects input received from the public.

### How will the Forest Service and BLM manage the monument?

The management of this area would be modeled after the successful management of the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument by BLM, Forest Service, State Parks, Tribes and others in Southern California. Each agency retains management control and responsibility of their respective lands but there is an overarching coordinated management plan for the area that is in accordance with the purpose, goals and objectives detailed in the legislation.

The Forest Service and the BLM have shared management of the congressionally legislated Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument in California since 2000, as well as the newly designated Browns Canyon National Monument in Colorado.

The Forest Service and BLM will jointly prepare a management plan for the monument that will address the actions necessary to protect the resources identified in the proclamation. The plan will be developed with maximum public involvement including tribal, area ranchers and permit holders, other interested stakeholders and state and local governments. The agencies will maximize opportunities for shared resources, operational efficiency and cooperation.



Photo by B. Schneider



### **Does the monument designation affect existing rights-of-way or commercial activities?**

The monument designation does not alter or affect the valid existing rights of any party. Most public and commercial activities will continue, consistent with the care and management of the objects identified in the proclamation.

### **How would existing Special Use Permits, including grazing, be impacted by a National Monument designation?**

Each agency will continue to apply the same laws, regulations and policies currently used in issuing and administering permits, including grazing permits or leases, on public lands inside the monument so long as they are consistent with the proper care and management of the objects protected by the monument designation.



### **Does the monument designation affect the ability to suppress and manage wildfires in the proposed monument area?**

The monument will not change current tactics or impact the suppression of wildfires. All future management will continue to focus first on public and firefighter safety while taking actions to protect valuable resources. Tools like prescribed fire may be used in the monument to address the risk of wildfire, insect infestation or disease that would imperil public safety or endanger the objects or resources protected by the monument designation.

### **Does the monument designation affect private property, water and other rights inside the proposed monument boundary?**

The designation does not alter or affect valid water rights, rights of way, or existing special use permits or commercial activities, as long as they are consistent with the care and management of the objects and resources protected by the designation.

### **Does the Monument designation impact water delivery, especially in this period of historic drought?**

Drought is an unpredictable, frequent and formidable visitor to California. In the past 100 years, California has experienced seven periods of drought, with the state currently in its fourth consecutive year of drought. California's forests are exhibiting signs of stress from the current drought and the effects of climate change.

The Monument designation will not affect normal (non-drought) water delivery to agricultural, rural or urban communities. In fact, the headwaters of the Eel River and Cache Creek lie within the Monument boundaries, and the designation could provide additional protections for these critical water sources.



Photo by Tuleyome

Photo by A. Fults

### **Are there recreation opportunities in this area?**

The Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument includes three scenic Wilderness Areas. The region is a popular recreation destination for visitors looking for a variety of outdoor fun including world-class off-highway vehicle trails, camping, fishing, hiking, kayaking, wildlife viewing, mountain biking, horseback riding and hang gliding.

### **What is Unique about the Berryessa Snow Mountain Area?**

#### ***A Biological Hotspot***

The Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument rises from near sea level in the south to over 7,000 feet in the north, creating a strong diversity of habitat types that support a variety of plant and wildlife species. In the higher-elevation Snow Mountain area, the biological diversity is among the richest in California.

The Berryessa Snow Mountain region consists of chaparral ecosystems and rolling oak woodlands at lower elevations, transitioning to mixed conifers. At higher elevations, the monument landscape is painted with thick stands of true fir, weather-shaped Jeffrey pine and incense cedar surrounded with natural fields of exposed rock formations.





Photo by Merlin

Two lush old-growth forest areas, a state game refuge and two research natural areas provide high quality habitat for a variety of threatened and endangered species including northern spotted owls, marten and fisher, as well as waterways for California Coastal chinook salmon and Northern California steelhead.

Visitors to the area may also see bald eagles, black bears, river otters, coyotes, deer, Tule elk, mountain lions, songbirds and many other wild animals roaming across this diverse, remote and rugged landscape.



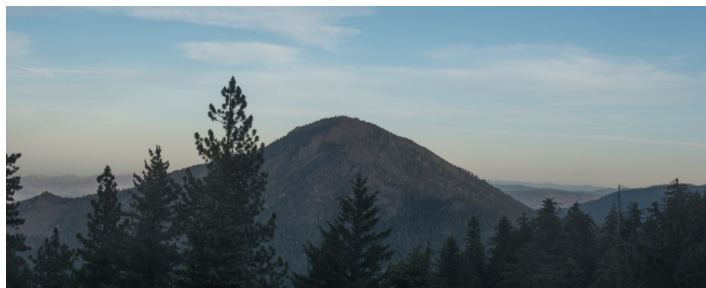
Photo by A. Fulk

This unique bioregion is home to some of the rarest plants on Earth. Springtime wildflower walks boast fields of California poppies, lupines and Indian paintbrush, along with the beauty of delicate serpentine plants.

### ***Geology – the Earth Tells Stories Here***

The geologic formations in the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument tell a dynamic geologic story. Several mountains, including Snow and Goat mountains, were once Jurassic seamounts – mountains rising from the ocean floor that never reached the water's surface. As the North American and Pacific plates shifted, the seamounts were pushed down into the earth's crust before eventually being pushed back to the earth's surface, transforming over time into the mountains we see today.

The corridor between Snow Mountain and Indian Valley Reservoir includes the Bartlett Springs Fault Zone, which features soda and hot springs, mercury deposits, geologic outliers and deformed marine fossil-bearing sediments.



Finally, the large, broad-topped Snow Mountain sheds precious water toward the Sacramento River in the east and the Eel River Basin in the west.

### ***A Rich Cultural History***

Native Americans have inhabited these lands for at least the last 11,000 years. The Yuki, Nomlaki, Patwin, Pomo, Huchnom, Wappo, Lake Miwok and Wintum tribes all had a role in the pre-history and history of this region — one of the most linguistically diverse in California.

The Berryessa Snow Mountain area is dense with cultural sites ranging from mineral gathering sites and seasonal hunting and gathering camps in the high country to major village sites with subterranean, earth-covered round buildings in the lowlands. The area is rich with chert quarries, task sites where tools were re-sharpened, food sites dominated by grinding stones used for preparing acorns and small seeds, pitted boulder petroglyphs where stories were shared, and early trade routes which allowed interaction between the tribes.

In the early 19th century, Spanish and Mexican expeditions as well as fur trappers for the Hudson Bay Company, explored this region. European-American settlement began during the 1840s gold rush, with some staying to operate small sawmills within the area's dense forests. The restored 1860s-era



Nye homestead cabin, the historic Prather Mill and remnants of railroad logging are tangible reminders of these historic uses. Around the turn of the 20th century, mineral-laden waters and hot springs attracted visitors to resorts and spas advertising their therapeutic benefits. Observant visitors can still spot the remains of the foundation of the Bartlett Springs resort.

# Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument

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- Land Status**
- Bureau of Indian Affairs
  - Forest Service
  - Fish and Wildlife Service
  - National Park Service
  - Bureau of Land Management
  - Bureau of Reclamation
  - State
  - BLM Wilderness
  - FS Wilderness



1:120,000

0 5 10 Miles



*Snow Mountain  
Wilderness*

*Clear Lake*

Clearlake

*Cache Creek  
Wilderness*

Brooks

*Lake  
Berryessa*

*Cedar  
Roughs  
Wilderness*

Calistoga

Santa Rosa

101

20

505